

NOTE ON THE GENUS GOETHALSIA PITTIER

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Study of an herbarium specimen from Colombia, Lawrance 494, led to the belief that it represented an undescribed genus of Flacourtiaceae. Because of the strong superficial resemblance of the plant to certain genera of Tiliaceae, search was also made for it in that family, where it was soon placed in the recently described genus Goethalsia of Pittier. Comparison with the type material at Washington, through the courtesy of the United States National Museum, verified the identification of the Lawrance plant with Goethalsia isthmica Pittier.

Since it was not possible to reconcile my own belief that the genus is flacourtiaceous with Pittier's assignment of it to the Tiliaceae, a more careful study of its structure was made and two interesting features unknown to Pittier were discovered.

Pittier had before him young fruits and mature flowers. Lacking the younger buds, he never saw the sepals, which are deciduous. The organs described by him as sepals are the petals and those which he termed petals are the corona. Pittier also described the ovary as three-celled, while my microtome sections show beyond a doubt that it is one-celled with three deeply intruded placentae, each of which bears two rows of seeds. The adjacent seeds from two placentae protrude into the false loculus between them and give the appearance of two rows of axile ovules.

Because of these facts, the genus is now transferred to the Flacourtiaceae and an emended description is presented.

Goethalsia Pitt. emend. Gl.

Sepala 3 valvata ante anthesin decidua; petals 5 valvata lanceolato-attenuata extra argenteo-tomentosa; coronae segmenta 5 libera hypogyna e medio ad basin cuneata, quam petalis multo breviciora, parte superiore erecta obtusa; stamina 25 libera; ovarium trigonum 1-loculare, placentis 3 alte invaginatis, ovulis paucis in quaque placenta biseriatis.

The young buds show the sepals distinctly. They are elliptic, 4 mm. long, and thinly stellate. When the bud reaches 4 mm. in length, the sepals separate from their close valvate union and fall off, while the petals increase in length to 10 mm. Lawrance 494 was collected at 900 m. altitude in the western mountains of Boyacá, a region which has yielded many other new or interesting species.